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ABSTRACT

This reader is intended for use in a bilingual education setting with advanced students of Gwich'in Athapascan. It consists of three traditional Athapascan myths. A free translation in English is provided for each story. (NCR)

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SAPIR-FREDSON STORIES I

edited and retranscribed by
Katherine Peter

a product of the

ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGE CENTER

a division of the
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University of Alaska
College, Alaska 99701

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Jii t'ee Christian Choo va'at
Rachel dizheh k'aa haa.
Jii deht'ly'aa kak.

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INTRODUCTION

Jii gwandak kwaii t'ee John
Fredson, Sapir ts'a' Xihteedeeyiinlii
t'inchy'aa. John Arctic Village
gwa'an vagwanlii 1891 dai'. Oonduk
nankak "University of the South"
Sewanee, Tennessee hee gooltin. 1945
dai' Gwichyaa Zhee geeghaii gwa'an
vakwaa. Edward Sapir aii ginjii
eenjit gwitr'it t'agwah'in nilii.
Sapir aii dinjii gwandaii, nihZehs'i'
gwandaii goqwaa'ee gwats'a' k'eegwaadhat.
Canada Ottawa gwa'an.

1923 dai' John yats'a' jii gwandak

kwaii Yihteediinlii t'inchy'aa.

Jii dehtYy'aa kwaii 50 years gahkhyuk

needarantY'oo kwaa. 1973-74 dai'

Katherine Peter neeyidaahtY'oo U of A

dinjii zhu' dehtYy'aa tr'adantY'oo

izhik. John aii izhik dai' ginkhii

gwiky'aa danahotY'oo t'inchy'aa.

Gwintsal qwirii ch'ijuk neeradaahtY'oo.

TR'OOKIT NAN ILTSAII

Deenaadai' nan kwaa ree qwinyaa.

Dinjii ch'ihYee rii khwah kat doodii ts'a'

neeteeyahahchik. Nihky'aa nan kwaa chuu

rii diineedha'ee. Yeedok hee ree geeyiichy'a'.

Dzan ree dinjii haa nihidik varahnyaa.

Ninyuk hee neeteegoohahchik ts'a' qohch'it

qwandaa khwah kat gatr'agaah'at. Dinjii

t'inyaa varahnyaa, "Nan tsal dinleeqaii

t'ee qahtsii haa ji' qoogaa nan kak vakak

k'eerii'oo haYtsyaa." Dzan dinjii eeqhaii

t'inyaa varahnyaa, "Chee qwich'in ihYii

qooqaa tth'aii nan naY'in kwaa. Zi'haa

zhakdhat noiizhii ji' deegwiheechy'aa li'."

"Gwik'ee qwiindaii," varahnyaa. Dzan ditsi'

ts'ik haa khaa ts'a' zhak hee k'iqwideenjik.

Shriit'agwahkhyuk qwahthaa tX'ee heekyaa -

kaii. Oozhak khyik neehihdik gehzhak

tr'iizhii qoo shizhit najat aanaii ts'a'

qwazhaa tr'eeqwaXtr'at. Njiyuk gwahaadhat

kwaa tX'ee, "Chan gwik'ee neegwihihdaii,"

nyaa ts'a' chan hee chineezhii. Ch'adai'

deeqwahkhyuk qwihiXthat juk gwandaa

t'agwahkhyuk hiljii. AiitX'ee chan hee

khaneetsyahkaii. "Nan naX'ya' gwich'in

qoo' khaiinjii shihdee shuu'aanaii ts'a'

qwazhaa han tr'eeshizhii." Nalzhii tX'ee,

"Chan oozhak nineehihdyaa," nyaa. GwintX'oo

neehoozhak tʃ'ee chan chineetoʃ ahnii.

Juk at'oohju' it'ee ninyuk gwihiʃthat.

"Kheehedyaa kwaa ʃii," tr'oonyaa qwiizhik

nehshrit chyʉ kak neeqoonjik. Khaiinjii

vizhii kwaa ts'a' vat'aii chan kwaa ts'a'

khwah kat oo'an hiltth'at. Ninyuk

gwahaadhat kwaa ts'a' k'iidak neenahodii

ts'a', "na'," nyaa ts'a' nantsal haa dinjii

antʃ'aanjik. "Shan" haa jii nants'an juk

nan vak'aa tr'iqwɪch'ii tr'iqwiʃtsɔii

gwinyaa.

DINJII SHOH YAK'ANYAA

Dinjii dazhan naii tthak nin vahzhit
goots'iheenjyaa gii'ii t'oonchy'aa.
Deenaadai' dinjii dazhan ch'ihZee gine'inlyaa
zhit shih tr'ik jyaa a'ii. Ch'ihZoo jii
dinjii naraarii danaa k'edik. Doo naii
qinlii ts'a' khehZok neegihiidal. Shih,
shih tr'ik shih zhuu kwaii haa gwizhiilk'ii
Zii gagogwah'aii. Shih'an oozhak
nach'agahaazhaa gwiizhik shih dihch'i'
vik'ii owanlii haa tr'anghoo. Ahtr'aii choo
diiteiinzhii k'it t'iizhik. "Tth'aii,"
tr'oonyaa gwiizhik t'iizhik ts'a' diirahtee
qwidiiZnaii. Vits'i' shrihteerahoojil.

Shih tr'ik adant'ee chiintr'aii k'it

t'iizhik qoo yee'at dinjii vahzhit vijyaa

yinlii nadhat ts'a' daatrat niiY'in.

"Aanaii." yahnyaa ts'a' da'an gwik'eeyingoo.

Ch'a'an gwikhyuu tY'oo naatr'at gwit'ih

gwik'it t'eeyaah naii. Shih diych'i'

chiitaii k'itee neegwitr'it t'agwah'ya'.

Vajat kheeghan nizii qwanlii kwaa ts'a'

izhik qwanaa khyik dinjii ich'itsyaa'e'

varahnyaa rit'arahnyaa. Dinjii chy'aa

dah rii nilii ts'a' dirinjaa ts'a'

nihdineezhii. "Shaa juu k'eegwaadhat

tr'iits'aa t'ishi'in," nyaa ts'a' didineet'ok

haadhak. Rit'inyaa varahnyaa, "Dinjii doo

naii ookyaa adaa yihththan. Ejii tik naii
 rii dooXkhwaii?" "Tth'aii dakdhat ch'ee'aa,
 oooowank'oo gwanlii deiinyaa?" khai' ts'a'
 hee yahnyaa. "Goowank'oo t'inchy'aa Yii
 rohnyaa," deehiiXnaii ts'a' daknel'ee.
 "Haa! Doonchy'aa dinjii gwaatsan," nyaa.
 "Fese' gwintsal lee, dinjii in'al lee
 chan vaa yigwaatsan chan t'iyahnyaa!"
 T'oo tee hee k'irilt'aii ts'a' khaii tthak
 tr'agwahthat. Niiyuk neegwihiidhak ts'a'
 hee tthaa shih tr'ik danan t'ahchak. Khaii
 gwiindhat ts'a' googaa gahgwiindaii kwaa,
 too ch'ihXak gwirii gwataa gwahaadhat
 gwindhan gwiizhik," yee'ok ch'aa'il

deiinchy'aa," shih tr'ik dakai' ahnyaa.

Chikiintthaii goo yi'eezhæ antX'it deedi'

Xaii danaadaa niqwiiX'in. "Chan gwinzii

neech'ihy'aa," nyaa ts'a' yeekit k'iitth'an

dinjii ts'a' qwik'ee kii. "Yeedaa valal

ahaa. "hehXok t'ohXii," gwinyaa ts'a'

haginjiriintrat. DeXchii k'it t'inchy'aa

qwiizhik vige hee qookanriXtXee.

Ndaa navatXoo'aanaii izhik chan Xaii k'an

yik'aahaajil ts'a' nihtee gihoogyuu ndaa

hee Xaii tr'eedananjil. Shih tr'ik dinjii

t'ahnyaa," it'ee qwiXgo' neehooshizhi'.

Yindhan ji' qwik'it t'ini'in. Dinjii

naan'in ji' dzaa ch'a'an goo'aii shiqii

kwaii naii haa nehshrit ndaa nits'ii
 neegoo^hihdal shee gwandak shro'. Shakai'
 chan juk kwaa. Shigii naii chan
 neeshrigaahchy'aa. Shee gwandak ji'
 sheegitr'it deehinlyaa, Yi'haa gwik'it
 t'ihinjyaa kwaa t'ihnyaa." "Mahsi',"
 varahnyaa ts'a' vats'an tr'eerii'oo.
 Dinjii neeraa'in izhik." Nijin khaii
 gwahthat," diirahnyaa, gaa tr'ahaachii kwaa.
 Gwilin neegwaadhat tY'ee tr'intsin qwinyaa.
 Khaii tthak shih kwaa. Ndaa ts'a' tthak
 dinihdan heeg^{aii} k'it t'oonchy'aa. Shih'an
 qoo'^{aii} ⁿⁱⁱyit ^{dai}' hee q^{wa}a^Y'ya'. Chy'^{aa}
 teegwirii gwits'eerahoojyaa," nyaa.

Shih'an qoo'aii qwats'a' needyaa gwiizhik

shih tr'ik vik'ii qwanlii ts'a' changhoo.

Dineevan needyaa aii zhyaatX'ee ts'a'

khayidiingyuu ts'a' yee'at k'iitthan hæ

qwik'it ch'atr'oaah. Khaii qwanlii

akwat ch'atth'an idiiltsaii. Teeddhaa

teenihdik ts'a' zhah zhit gijuu Xuu

vak'adidha'ee goodlit. Jyaa dinchy'aa

ts'a' nin gwintX'oo vagwaajjat idiiltsaii.

Vakak Xuu qwanlii ts'a' tr'ahdak vagwantrii

k'i' zhyaa vakak qaalaii ts'a'. Jyaa

dinchy'aa ts'a' niyuk hee oo'an shinyihiXchii.

k'eegwildhat tX'ee hee oo'anshinyihiXchii.

NAHTFYAH DAKWAIITRYAA HAA TR'AGWAHDAAI

Deenaadai' nin datthak dinjii k'it
,,

owandaii gwinyaa. Nahtryaa niirii haa

niihaa iiii veek'eerii'oo gwinyaa. Gwandaii

datthak shaa ahnyaa, "Shaa nijuk ahaa
,,

deet'ii'ir? Shigiinat eenjit khyu' hee

neehihdik. Shaa nah'choi," t'ihchy'aa.
,,

Shaa ninhaa danahnyaa. Too datthak
,,

veech'andaii rinlii ts'a' Yaa gwinzii
,,

tr'inch'i' kwaa. Van dai' tth'aii too
,,

qwanlii qwiizhik kwaiitri ahdan.
,,

Nach'aakaii tr'ilyaa qoo dee'in dakwaiitryaa
,,

diikwaiitryaa haa nihjekheenaahjil. Yaa
,,

k'ineechii qwiizhik khai' naraa'oo ts'a'
,,

kwaiitryah k'iten~~era~~adlii. Niiyuk
"

owihiiln~~aii~~ kwaa ts'a' chan dee'in
"

nineech'aak~~aii~~ ts'a' nihts'ee~~kheehii~~Xjil

tX'ee dakwaiitryaa oonyaa aii ko' zhit
"

ach'ahshaa. Khakiriho'aii aii ts'a'
"

diikwaiitryaa k'eejit zhineerohoo'yuu goo
"

deenyaa, "Shaa shakwaiitryaa dah'in? It'ee
"

rii kwaiitryaa al'ii. Khadiinchy'aa googaa
"

vat'aXchy'aa t'inchy'aa." Kwaiitryah

k'eejit van dai' vizhirin'yuu, khai' ts'a'
"

qwinzii neeraadal googaa diideediizhaa

aii t'inyaa tr'oonyaa kwaa ts'a' kwaiitryah

zhee kwaraan~~aii~~. Gwa'an vit ts'i'
"

tr'eerii'oo gwiizhik t'inyaa varahnyaa,

"Shaa shihleheeqyaa qwich'in. Han shats'a'
 ch'ahah'aa vuu. Tr'ooXk'ii kwaa ts'a'
 nadhat gwiizhik ch'ak'oh zhit vats'an aih
 haa tr'eerii'oo. Tr'aah'ya' tY'ee niyyit
 kwaa vankeeneeragwaa'in goo hiljii vik'ih
 gwirii qogweech'in. AhtY'an dich'iYchaa
 dakwaii tY'ee qahtY'ii haa neehidiiYii
 varahnyaa. Izhik dai' qwats'an nahtryah
 k'ii k'it diikwaii tY'ee qarahtY'ii haa
 neerihii'oo k'it vik'ih t'oonchy'aa
 varahnyaa.

HOW THE WORLD WAS MADE

A long time ago, they say, there was no land. Just one man was sitting on a raft, floating around. There was no land anywhere. There was only water and sky. A muskrat was traveling around with the man. When they had been floating around on the raft for a long time, they got tired of it. The man said, so they say, "With just the amount of earth that's under one's fingernails, I will make enough land to walk around on." Then the muskrat replied to the man, "Even though I live in the water, I still have never seen the bottom. I wonder how it would be if I went down farther?" "Try it," the man said.

The muskrat beat the water with his narrow tail and was down a long time. After some time, he popped up. "I went lower than I usually go, but I got scared, and I hurried back up." After just a little while, saying "I'll try again," back in the water he went. After a longer time than he had spent before, again he came up nose first.

"I think I saw earth, but just then I got out of breath, and I came back up quickly." After resting, he said, "I'll go down there again." After taking a great breath he dived into the water like a splashing rock. Now indeed he spent a long time down. Just as the man was thinking, "Surely he won't ever come out again," the muskrat regained the surface with great difficulty. He was out of breath and out of strength, and he fell over on the raft. After a little bit he sat up, saying "Here!" and handed the man a little bit of earth. And indeed they say this earth we now live on was made by medicine from that bit of earth.

THE WOLVERINE LOSES HIS SHOES

Long ago, they say, all the animals lived like people. The wolverine was out hunting and arrived at a place to spend the night. He called everyone 'brother-in-law'. "What is my brother-in-law doing out walking around?" he said.

"I have been out hunting for my children, in vain."

"Spend the night with me," he said to him.

All night the other man was on the lookout for the wolverine; truly he did not sleep well. In the morning while it was still dark, Wolverine jumped up without his moccasins on. The man peeked at him with half open eyes. What did Wolverine do, but exchange his moccasins for the man's! As soon as Wolverine fell back asleep, the man got up silently and put the moccasins back in their original places. After a little while, Wolverine got up again and raked up the fire, and poked a hole in what he believed to be the man's moccasins with a burning stick. When the man got up and was about to put on his moccasins, what did Wolverine say but "My brother-in-law, what are you doing with my moccasins? Those are the only moccasins I have. Though they are torn, I still use them."

The man showed him the nice new moccasins that he always put on in the morning, and spoke angrily to him. Then, paying no attention to what Wolverine was saying, he put the moccasins on and quickly departed. As he was about to leave, Wolverine said, "My brother-in-law, it looks like I'll starve, I guess. Be sure you send someone quickly to me here." The man paid no attention to him, and left him standing there before the dying fire in the cold. After not seeing him for a long time, the man went back to see if Wolverine was still there, but he was gone; only his tracks were to be seen. He had tied spruce branches around the middle of his feet and was walking around like that. And ever since then, they say, Wolverine's tracks have looked like someone walking around with spruce boughs tied under his feet.

THE MAN WHO HAD A BEAR FOR HIS GUARDIAN SPIRIT

All shamans have an animal who will give them assistance in dreams. Long ago a medicine man was dreaming and he dreamed he had a female brown bear as his partner. Once this man was out hunting with some other men. There were four of them traveling together. They found a den with a female bear and her cubs in it. As they were about to poke a stick into the hole, the old man bear was seized with madness and plunged out of the hole. He came among them like a great wind. Before they had time to think, he did it. They scattered from him fearfully in all directions. He came on like a wind, and the she-bear saw her dream partner trembling in fear. "Come on!" she said to him, and she let him go quickly back into her den. She pushed the grass away from the walls of the den and threw him down behind it. Outside, the old man bear was doing his work as usual. In the old days, when weapons were not so good, that rotten one took advantage of people, so they say. He tore up the men outside and left them scattered on the ground in pools of blood. With blood on his lips he returned to his wife. "I am the master around here; of course I do so." So saying, he licked his lips repeatedly. And he said, "I thought four men were walking up to the den. How is it that I have only killed three?"

"The sun is still high--you must have seen their shadows," she answered quickly.

"Yes, I think it must have been their shadows," he agreed, and lay down on his back. "Phew! what's that, why is there a smell of man here?"

"Ugh! I guess he ate some manflesh, and he smells of it, so he says that."

Lying under the grass, the medicine man lay stretched out, all winter long. Once in a great while, the she-bear would give him a ground squirrel. Winter was over, though he did not know it. He thought only one night had gone past.

Then he heard the she-bear tell her husband, "Water is dripping outside. Why do you not go out?"

The old bear put his head out and down in the valley he spied a team of dogs pulling some people quickly along. "I shall eat well again," he said, and he galloped down into the valley toward the people.

"The slimy one is coming! Get him all together!" they shouted quickly in loud voices. While he was suspended in a leap above the ground each of them shot arrows through his heart. Immediately he flopped down all limp and the dirty old dogs fell upon him and tore him to pieces. Then the dogs started off again pulling the people.

The she-bear said to the man, "Now spring has finally arrived, the ground is visible. If you think you want to go back, do as you wish. If you see human people again, do not tell them where my den is, where I go along with my children trailing one behind the other, clambering over the ground. My husband is dead now too. My children are poor and pitiful. If you tell about me, you will say what I cannot. Indeed, I cannot talk as you talk."

"Thanks," he said to her, and started back from her. When he saw people again, they asked him, "Where did you spend the winter?" but he did not answer.

Many years later, it is said, there was a famine. All winter there was no food. After a while, it looked like the people would starve. The man said, "A long time ago I saw a bear hole. Let us go back to it as well as we can," he said. As he was going back, the she-bear, angry, plunged out. She leaped up under him as he went ahead of the people, tore him to pieces, and rushed madly down the hill into the valley. Since it was winter, she made herself into a transformed-bear. She crawled again and again from the open water into the snow, until she had ice all over her. Thus she made herself into a greatly feared animal. Because she had ice on her, when one shot an arrow at her, it merely glanced off the icy armor that coated her. Thus she was master of the people for a long time, and did as she pleased until she died of old age.